

END HUNGER NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to visit and volunteer at the Philadelphia region's largest hunger relief center, Philabundance.

Philabundance, a member of the Feeding America network of food banks, aims to drive hunger out of local communities with an eye toward eradicating hunger altogether. Each week, Philabundance serves 90,000 people in the Philadelphia area through partnerships with 350 agencies and food distribution programs. Incredibly, last year alone, they distributed almost 30 million pounds of food to neighbors suffering from hunger and food insecurity in nine counties.

I was impressed by the innovative strategies Philabundance employs to feed hungry people in its region. The Philabundance Community Kitchen equips those looking to reenter the workforce with valuable life and kitchen skills, while also providing meals to those in need.

Philabundance also opened the Nation's first nonprofit grocery store called Fare & Square in Chester, a city that faced a serious economic downturn due to the loss of manufacturing jobs. Fare & Square provides affordable and healthy food to the community, as well as discounts to those who qualify.

Food banks across our country like Philabundance and places like the Worcester County Food Bank and Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, which are both in my congressional district, do incredible work to reduce hunger in surrounding communities. They employ innovative strategies to fight hunger and increase access to nutritious food for our most vulnerable neighbors.

But the truth of the matter is we know that food banks and our charitable organizations can't do it alone. Some in Congress have proposed cuts and other restrictions to our Federal antihunger and nutrition programs. We often hear from them that charities, not the government, should be responsible for eradicating hunger.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that food banks and food pantries and other charitable organizations are incredible on-the-ground partners in our effort to end hunger. They are often the first line of defense in emergency situations. But charities cannot do everything. That is just a fact.

Charities do face limitations. Many are small and only open on limited schedules. Most are run with the support of dedicated volunteers, some of whom have other full-time jobs. Often, these charities operate out of small places like basements or closets at houses of worship. Importantly, they rely on donations from members of the community as a primary source of food to distribute.

Our charities are doing an incredible job on the front lines, but ending hun-

ger will take a strong partnership between these organizations and Federal, State, and local governments. For our part, the Federal Government must continue to invest in our preeminent food and nutrition programs like SNAP, WIC, and The Emergency Food Assistance Program, known as TEFAP, just to name a few, and fight any attempts to cut or weaken them. TEFAP is especially important to our food banks, as they rely on this Federal funding to serve those in need.

We know that strong Federal investments in these critical safety net programs reduce hunger, improve the diets of low-income households, and save billions of dollars in healthcare costs. So the next time any of my colleagues try to score political points by demonizing Federal hunger programs, I ask you to think of these programs and the impacts they are having on constituents in each of our districts. I urge you to visit local food banks and charities and see all the incredible work they are doing to reduce hunger in our communities. Ask these organizations how the Federal antipoverty programs support their efforts to bring food to those most in need.

I urge all my colleagues to remember this fact:

Today, in the United States of America, the richest country in the history of the world, over 42 million of our fellow citizens are hungry. They are kids, senior citizens, people who can't find work, and many people who are, in fact, working. They defy stereotypes. But all of them are our brothers and sisters, and we should care. We should absolutely do more than we are doing right now to end hunger in America.

The Federal Government, working with charities and local partners, has, within its grasp, the power to end hunger now; what we lack is the political will. Let's at long last create the political will and guarantee that, in our country, no one ever has to struggle with food insecurity or hunger. We can end hunger now.

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MOMENT OF SILENCE HONORING FORMER CONGRESSMAN BILL BARRETT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. SMITH) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Nebraska. Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of former Congressman Bill Barrett. He passed away earlier this week in his hometown of Lexington, Nebraska.

Mr. Barrett devoted his life to service. From his speakership in the State legislature to the years he spent in Congress, he was known for being true to his word and bringing people together to get things done. Serving Nebraskans was his top priority, and his dedication to the Third District and our State set a lasting example for me and all who have sought to fill his shoes.

Mr. Barrett was an influential conservative leader and a champion of agriculture. The Third District is now the top-producing agriculture district in the country, and we owe much of that to Mr. Barrett's tireless work.

His former staff have recounted how he would always ask: "Does this help the Third District?"

He was a true statesman who sought to serve others rather than himself. He worked so hard representing the 60-plus counties of the Third District for the 10 years that he served.

I extend my condolences to Mr. Barrett's wife and tremendous teammate, Elsie, and their family.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to request a moment of silence.

CONGRESSIONAL INABILITY TO PASS THE NDAA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, this is a sage-grouse. I found out that the sage-grouse have poor eyesight, so they often collide with barbed wire fences and other obstructions that are difficult to see. And these collisions are often fatal.

But the sage-grouse looks like a keen-eyed hawk compared to Congress. That is because the sage-grouse recently collided with the National Defense Authorization Act, and the near-sighted bird won. Hopefully this time it won't be fatal.

We were supposed to vote to send the NDAA to the President this week, but a disagreement between the House and the Senate Republicans about the sage-grouse got egg all over the deal. That is right, a bill that authorizes over \$600 billion in spending on wartime operations, weapons acquisition, service-member benefits, and many other provisions critical to the defense of our country was taken down by a bird. But unlike the plane that landed in the Hudson River, Congress doesn't seem to have a Captain Sully to rescue it from bird-induced mayhem.

Don't get me wrong. The NDAA has many problems. It redirects billions in critical funding towards a program the Defense Department does not want. It sidesteps the Bipartisan Budget Act compromise by requiring supplemental funding just to keep the Pentagon running. It contains a myriad of poison pill riders, from allowing contractors to engage in discrimination against the LGBTQ employees, to releasing tens of thousands of handguns into our communities with no background checks.

All of these reasons are why I voted against the bill in committee and on the House floor. Nonetheless, the conference report is a compromise between the Senate and the House on complex issues ranging from funding operations against ISIS to military healthcare reform, a compromise on everything but this pesky bird.

House Republicans stubbornly refuse to remove language that would prohibit the sage-grouse from being placed